



BALLOT**PEDIA**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**UNDERSTANDING POLICE COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING AGREEMENTS**

December 2023

Criminal Justice: Understanding police collective bargaining agreements

Summary

This document provides a well-rounded perspective on police collective bargaining agreements and deeper insights into the arguments and reform approaches related to policing policy.

By the end of this reading, you will have an understanding of the following concepts:

- What a police collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is
- What is typically included in police CBAs
- High-level takeaways from Ballotpedia's research on police CBAs in the 50 states and top 100 U.S. cities

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Criminal Justice: Police collective bargaining agreements (CBA)

What is a CBA?

The term police collective bargaining agreement (CBA) refers to a contract between cities, states, or other governing entities and police unions to establish rights, protections, and provisions for law enforcement officers.

Police collective bargaining agreement

A collective bargaining agreement (CBA), in the context of police union contracts, is a contract between cities, states, or other governing entities and police unions to establish rights, protections, and provisions for law enforcement officers. CBAs can determine a variety of departmental procedures including, but not limited to, the arbitration process, training standards, and the steps to investigate and/or punish an officer for misconduct. CBAs also establish wages and benefits for police officers. CBAs are only one of many places in which policies can be set concerning police officer conduct, investigations, discipline, hiring, qualifications, training, and evaluation. Policies are also set in state law, in local charters and ordinances, and by police departments.

Some states or cities may have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or memorandum of agreement (MOA) with police unions in place of a CBA.

An MOU is a non-binding written agreement between a governing entity and a police union regarding certain employment terms and conditions. While not legally binding, MOUs represent that both parties have come to an agreement on standards and procedures for law enforcement.

An MOA, on the other hand, is a legally binding written document between a governing entity and a police union that establishes an agreed-upon objective. MOAs represent a formal agreement on certain terms and conditions between governments and law enforcement.

Jurisdictions can also develop meet and confer agreements which are labor agreement contracts between a police union and a governing entity that resolve disputes.

Implementation of police CBAs

Some of the hiring, training, and discipline standards for police officers not established by statutes or regulations arise from negotiations with police unions. Those negotiations are often codified in CBAs.

Not all states and cities have police CBAs. Some states and cities restrict collective bargaining, but may still negotiate with police unions using other methods. After negotiating with the unions, those jurisdictions sometimes establish police standards through documents including MOUs, MOAs, or meet and confer agreements.

According to an analysis of police union collective bargaining agreements and related arrangements with police unions concerning hiring, training, and disciplinary requirements in the 50 states and top 100 cities by population, 26 states and 80 cities had police union agreements as of December 2021

High-level takeaways from Ballotpedia's research

States and cities with CBAs

Ballotpedia's research explored police CBAs in the 50 states and the top 100 U.S. cities by population. Ballotpedia's analysis produced the following key takeaways (as of December 2021):

- **26** states have police union agreements
- **22** states did not have police union agreements
- **80** cities have police union agreements
- **17** cities did not have police union agreements
- There are **2** states and **4** cities in which the request for information on police CBAs was denied or information could not be verified

Police hiring, training, and disciplinary requirements in CBAs

Here are some key takeaways from Ballotpedia's research about police hiring, training, and disciplinary requirements in CBAs, as of December 2021:

- Police **hiring** requirements included in CBAs:
 - **Four** states (Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Pennsylvania) and **one** city (Austin, Texas) have police union agreements that give the union authority over which law enforcement officers receive promotions
 - **Eight** states and **14** cities have police union agreements that require police departments to conduct annual performance evaluations for law enforcement officers

Police hiring, training, and disciplinary requirements in CBAs (continued)

- Police **training** requirements included in CBAs:
 - **One** city (Santa Ana, California) has a police union agreement that requires law enforcement officers to learn CPR
 - **One** city (Tulsa, Oklahoma) has a police union agreement that requires law enforcement officers to complete annual driving training
 - **Two** states and **seven** cities have police union agreements that contain annual firearms training requirements
 - **Seven** states and **three** cities have police union agreements that give the union power over new training programs for law enforcement officers
- Police **disciplinary** requirements included in CBAs:
 - **One** city (Denver, Colorado) has a legal code that prohibits police union agreements from addressing disciplinary issues
 - **One** city (Buffalo, New York) has a police union agreement that requires police departments to go through arbitration to punish officers for misconduct
 - **Four** states (Connecticut, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio) have police union agreements that require state-run database storage for disciplinary records of law enforcement officers
 - **10** cities have police union agreements that allow for citizen review boards to look into complaints of officer misconduct
 - **19** states and **44** cities have police union agreements that specify how law enforcement officers will be investigated for misconduct
 - **20** states and **40** cities have police union agreements that specify how law enforcement officers will be punished for misconduct
 - **21** states and **45** cities have police union agreements that specify who may represent or defend law enforcement officers during a misconduct investigation



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Your source for accurate, comprehensive info on police CBAs in every state and 100 most populous cities.

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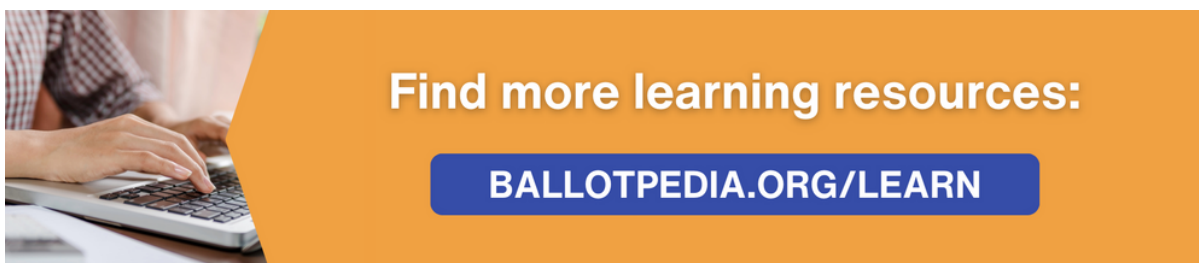
The advertisement features a dark blue background with a large orange circle on the left. Inside the circle, a hand holds a tablet displaying the Ballotpedia CBA Dashboard website. The website interface shows a 'Topics' section with several blue buttons. The text 'BALLOT PEDIA' is in white, with 'PEDIA' in orange. The main title 'CBA DASHBOARD' is in large white letters. To the right of the circle, the text 'Your source for accurate, comprehensive info on police CBAs in every state and 100 most populous cities.' is in white. At the bottom right, there is a white button with the text 'VISIT NOW' in blue. In the top right corner, there is a yellow banner with the words 'NEW PRODUCT' in blue and orange.

Continued reading:

Thank you for downloading our PDF on criminal justice.

Check out the following Ballotpedia pages to dive deeper into the key concepts of this report:

- [List of state and city police union agreements](#)
- [Arguments related to police hiring, training, and discipline](#)
- [Reform proposals related to police officer hiring, training, and discipline](#)
- [Index of articles about criminal justice policy](#)
- [Police hiring, training, and disciplinary requirements by state and city](#)



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